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10 October 2024

was presented



EU WEEK: BORGO PARADISO SUSTAINABLE, SHARED AND INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT

Notes for Dissemination



2024



International Academic
Research Center - UNICART



European Week of the Regions and Cities 2024
Peer review - Notes for dissemination
Borgo Paradiso Sustainable, Shared And Inclusive Development
10 October 2024 - Bruxelles



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be present at European Week of the
Regions and Cities 2024 whit the project

Borgo Paradiso: sustainable, shared and inclusive development

Analysis, presentations and discussions during the peer review. Notes for dissemination.



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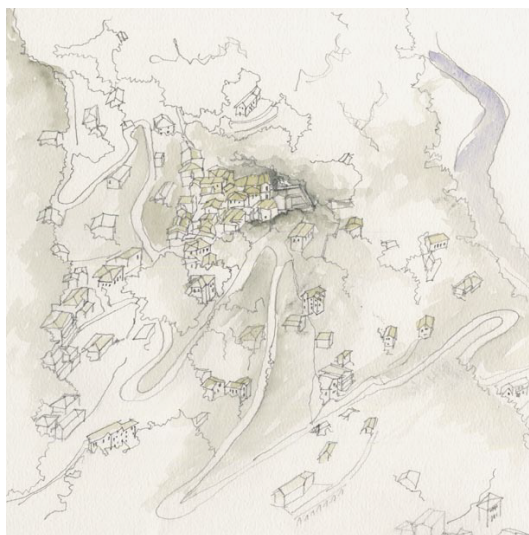
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Premise

On October 10, the peer review of the project “Borgo Paradiso: sustainable, shared and inclusive development” promoted by the International Academic Research Center – UNICART with the support of Consulumarc Sviluppo S.r.l. as external organizer was held at the “European Week of Regions and Cities 2024 - EU-RegionsWeek close to you” of the European Commission.

The project intends to enhance the territory, both in terms of social and urban recovery of (Borgo di Veddo) and from the point of view of its repopulation.

The project initiative intends to enhance the territory, both in terms of social and urban recovery of Borgo di Veddo as an element of a much larger lake and pre-Alpine context, and from the point of view of the repopulation of the city which has seen a depopulation of residents and young people in recent years. Among the focuses is the hospitality sector, especially the elderly, projecting the future according to the most innovative aspects of the digital and technological revolution and proposing itself to become a "Short Accommodation Open Village", always



keeping in mind the aspects of the recovery of typical products and food and wine in an eco-sustainable perspective.

The theme of the peer review focused on sustainable tourism and the urban and social recovery of "Borgo Veddo", a small and ancient village located on Lake Maggiore between the Canton of Ticino (SW) and the Province of Varese (IT) in which currently, through the 'Borgo Paradiso' project, the Municipality and Province and private owners have started a project to enhance the territory, both in terms of urban and social recovery of the Borgo di Veddo, as an element of a lake and pre-Alpine context cross-border with the Canton of Ticino, as well as from the point of view of repopulation which has seen a decrease in residents and young people in recent years. The peer review featured high-profile guest speakers who discussed issues related to the social sustainability of tourism, the valorization of local production as a lever for the development of the territory, green building in the use of construction materials, as well as a comparison between two different locations but with common challenges (Lake Garda and Lake Maggiore) with a focus on the development policies launched in the two territories, with a view to public and private participation, in the planning of activities related to growth and cohesion.

The speakers and their speeches

The presentations were moderated by Dr. Paolo Snidero, an expert in community policies and contact person for the International Academic Research Center – UNICART Brussels, who also introduced and structured each report in light of the exponential growth of sustainable tourism and its affirmation as one of the main trends in the tourism sector at a global level: "This transformation is fueled by a growing environmental and social awareness on the part of travellers, who increasingly choose destinations and experiences that respect ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) criteria," said Dr. Snidero, specifying that "the Borgo Paradiso project aims to recover and enhance abandoned properties in the municipality of Maccagno/Veddo of great historical value" adding that "the objective of the project is not only the restructuring of the real estate assets, but the creation of a system capable of planning and coordinating the activities of the tourism sector, with a view to involving representatives of municipal and provincial public administrations together with the actors of the local economic



production system", as well as financial institutions in the realization of the growth of a territory in cohesion with the policies of the Green Revolution. The guiding idea of the initiative is to recover the real estate assets of the Borgo di Veddo to make it a short-term "Open Village" accommodation facility, whose ancient vital urban and settlement function is a moment of inhabitation and vital connection between the lake reality of the shore of Lake Maggiore on which Maccagno stands and the pastoral sylvan reality of the pre-Alpine environment given by the Alta Valle Veddasca and the historic border with the nearby Swiss Confederation. It was underlined how the project for its realization benefits from sustainable finance and how the advisor Consulmarc Sviluppo Srl considered in the assembly of the financial architecture the criterion of "blended finance" (mixed finance) recommended by the European Commission (27/06/2023 n. 1425).

Speakers included:

- **Charles-Etienne Bélanger**,
Director of the International Organization for Social Tourism;
- **Paolo Borchia**,
MEP and group leader of the PFE;
- **Domenica Nigro**,
Professor at University of Bari Aldo Moro, Department of Soil, Plant and Food Sciences
- **Nicola Favia**
Researcher at University of Bari Aldo Moro, Department of Soil, Plant and Food Sciences
- **Selene Ossola**,
Project manager Rete Italia Business Network;
- **Marco Magrini**,
President of the Province of Varese;
- **Ivan Vargiu**,
Mayor of the Municipality of Maccagno with Pino and Veddasca.

Moderator

- **Avv. Paolo Snidero**
Expert in European Policies - Consulmarc Sviluppo srl Treviso (IT) ; Bruxelles (BE)
IARC-UNICART EU Policies Committee Bruxelles Office



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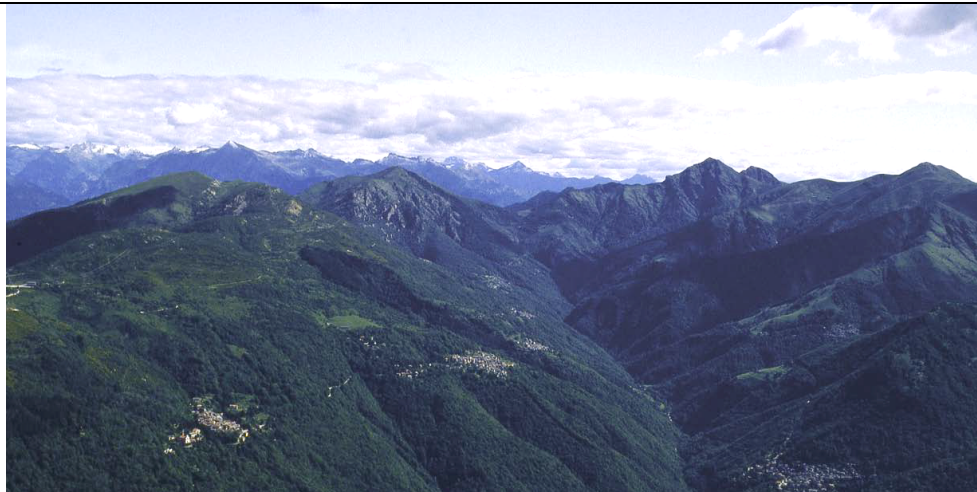


The storyteller lives his life
as if he were telling it;
You have to choose:
to live or to tell.
Borgo Paradiso lives again
to tell and share
its story





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BORG PARADISO

Sustainable, Shared and Inclusive Development

Project

Paolo SNIDERO

Expert in European Policies - Consulmarc Sviluppo srl Treviso (IT) – Bruxelles (BE)

IARC-UNICART EU Policies Committee Bruxelles Office

The theme of the conference refers to the correlation between human heritage and innovation and sustainable development in a priority area for us Italians such as the Mediterranean basin.

The project I am about to present can constitute a good practice for those who want to invest in Common led local development projects, projects that must be designed to be coherent with the pillars of the European Green Deal and the SDGs goals of Agenda 2030 on sustainability.

Borgo Paradiso project was selected by the European Commission to be presented during the EU Week of Regions and Cities which will be held in October in the week from 7 to 11 and which will deal with the theme of sustainability.

The Project aims to recover and enhance some abandoned properties in the municipality of Maccagno/Veddo overlooking Lake Maggiore in the Lombardy region Italy, which are part of an ancient village (BORGO), affected by depopulation but of great historical, cultural and tourist interest, and aims through their regeneration to enhance and promote the integrated development tourism system of the territory, made up of its citizens, its cultural and agri-food traditions, through a concept of sustainability in coherence with the ESG impact criteria of the Community Green Deal. We can define the System as a homogeneous tourist context, including territorial areas characterized by the integrated offer of cultural and environmental assets and



tourist attractions, including typical products of agriculture and local craftsmanship and by the widespread presence of individual or associated tourist businesses that revolve around the village.

The aim of the project is not only the renovation of real estate properties, but the creation of a system capable of planning and coordinating related tourist activities with a view to development and coordination between the representatives of the Municipality and Province Public Administrations together with the actors of the local economic production system:

- exaltation of the dimension of territorial sustainability of the tourist offer;
- necessary integration between the different components of the system, and in particular between public and private actors, not only in the management phase, but also in that of project development
- assessment of suitability to guarantee a high level of environmental protection (Green phase);
- verification of the relationship between SSI and territorial specificities, especially with a view to defining systems of rules (governance) appropriate and coherent to the territory even if within a system of common principles (sustainable development).
- Enhance human resources and tourism skills;
- Improve infrastructure and services for accessibility to all;
- Develop the short agri-food supply chain system
- encourage the improvement of the quality of accommodation, reception and access services managed by public (and private) entities;
- supporting the qualification and sustainability of the tourist offer as a whole with priority given to structural and infrastructure adjustments, with particular attention to interventions aimed at raising quality levels, implementing and standardizing tourist services;
- encourage the inclusion of interventions to support local resources within territorial programming and planning;
- promote the development of digitalisation and digital management both in terms of technology and content, use and language at the service of public and private operators;
- promote the development of quality brands, environmental certification and supply chain



aggregations as well as the protection of the image of the local tourism product: Cub di Prodotto (PRODUCT CLUB)

There is no doubt that the energy transition and digital transformation, which are the pillars of the current EU and National programming for the period 2021-2027, must be influenced by INNOVATION, innovation which impacts primarily on enabling technologies, but also on new generation systems and mechanisms: in the training of human resources, in the management and operational aspects, in the contractual and corporate aspects, but also in the design of new financial instruments, given that these innovations have a cost and which must however be made sustainable and accessible to different users, from a Public and Private Partnership (PPP) perspective.

The common denominator that unites entrepreneurs - public administration bodies in this INNOVATIVE revolution is **"sustainability"**.

The implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development undoubtedly requires a holistic, participatory and multilevel approach. National and local governance plays a central role in this approach to operationalize a vision of sustainable development and contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In this framework, the localization of the SDGs involves the systemic integration of the three dimensions of ESG sustainability (Environmental, Social and Governance) and the related policy areas, the horizontal involvement of the public sector, the private sector (PPP) and all social actors and the multilevel vertical alignment between governance systems: local municipality, regional, national.

This assumption has become a paradigm that has been applied in the criteria for evaluating the financeability of local development projects (CLLD) by the European Commission and by EuParl when it launched the Recovery Funds 2021-2027 and in the descending phase by the PNRR and PRRR of the regions.

The European Commission in the preamble of Next Generation EU indicates as substantial elements of its programme, in addition to the themes of "Green Deal and Digitalisation" as the future of Europe, the need for an **"action plan for the social economy"** that supports social investments, give support to the actors of the social economy and to social enterprises, to start new activities, develop existing ones, innovate, and create employment".



The **EUROPEAN COMMISSION, with RECOMMENDATION (EU) 2023/1425 of 27 June 2023** invited Union Governments, Union Financial Intermediaries, Large Enterprises, SMEs and similar operators from the EU and outside the EU to adopt Sustainable financial mechanisms and instruments to define and establish in detail the financing needs of the transition of their investments. The Commission Recommendation on facilitating financing for the transition to a sustainable economy complements previous recommendations with more detailed considerations to support the voluntary use of the EU Sustainable Finance Framework instruments for transition financing. It presents various options and suggestions to assist businesses and financial institutions in setting transition objectives, detailing and identifying transition projects and associated financing needs, and raising or disbursing transition financing. To better achieve the goals it has set for itself by 2030, the European Commission has consequently included the principle of **BLENDED FINANCE** (mixed finance) permanently among the financial instruments of the European Union budget and to provide, in the 2021-2027 programming, its extension within a dedicated programme, called InvestEU.

BLENDED FINANCE is the term used when public or philanthropic funds are used to catalyze private capital investments (particularly in frontier markets). It was conceived as a way to help close the financing gap to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals by leveraging public and philanthropic capital to bring more private capital to the development finance table. Typically, public or philanthropic entities provide a type of concessional and catalyst capital that lowers the risk profile of a particular investment for the commercial or private entity. This allows entities to invest together while allowing different parties to define their own measure of success.

Blended finance is not limited to a specific transaction type, but is instead a structuring approach with three key characteristics:

- Impact, particularly regarding the SDGs, is a motivating factor in the transaction
- Financial returns are expected, although different parties may have different return expectations



-
- Public or philanthropic capital is leveraged to serve as a catalyst for the addition of private capital.

How are blended finance operations structured?

Grants: The public/philanthropic partner provides money to support the project which has no expectation of being repaid. These funds can be used to support non-income generating activities or early stage preparations.

Guarantees: The public/philanthropic partner offers protection (often in the form of insurance) against capital loss. (reduces risk or increases credit rating)

Technical assistance: The public/philanthropic partner offers direct support to an entrepreneur, typically through a technical assistance facility or an incubator.

Junior Equity: The public/philanthropic partner takes ownership of the investment, but accepts a subordinate position in the structure, effectively accepting higher risk for lower returns. This structure is sometimes also referred to as subsidized capital or first loss capital.

Flexible Debt: Similar to junior capital, the public/philanthropic partner can accept terms contingent on the debt structure, allowing for more favorable terms than those offered by the market.

Social impact bonds (SIB), understood as public-private partnership tools (see regional accreditations) that combine performance-based contracts and private financing and allow governments and public bodies (particularly local) to acquire and remunerate services that allow the achievement of objectives social:

- In the first component of a SIB, the pay-for-performance contract, the Public Body entrusts a subject with the implementation of a (usually) preventive intervention to address a social problem and reduce the related economic costs, agreeing on targeted results which translate into public payments only if successful (services of public interest)
- The second key element of SIB contracts is the presence of a third party that advances the necessary resources through ordinary banking finance, but also extraordinary through equity-quasiequity from non-banking third parties.



All of these strategies work to reduce the riskiness of an investment for private investors, thus leveraging public or philanthropic funds provided to achieve certain SDG targets.

Analyzing the sectoral interventions of the PNRR we find evidence in the sectors and missions reported below:

- in the culture and tourism sector where, alongside "creative and artisanal businesses", there are tens of thousands of organizations that already manage cultural activities, including "projects for investments in places of identity in the area and in social and return tourism";
- in the sector of sustainable agriculture and the circular economy, where cooperative forms constitute one of the major players and are carrying out important innovations both in making the production of associated companies more sustainable and in the recovery of uncultivated lands – for example with experiences of social agriculture – and in the production of energy from biomass;
- in strengthening skills and the right to study relating to the hospitality sector;
- in territorial cohesion interventions see examples of PPP.

The theme of sustainable tourism from an economic and financial point of view is closely related to that of impact investing, a rapidly growing sector that supports traditional finance to accommodate the needs of new categories of responsible and ethical investors, interested not only to a financial return but also to the pursuit of a social impact. According to the latest report from the Global Impact Investing Network (GIIN), <https://thegiin.org/> the amount of assets managed in the sector worldwide is more than 100 billion dollars.

The impact investing that pervades the contents of the European Commission program and therefore in the descending phase the PNRR and PRRR is representative of those investments with a measurable and intentional impact which can take different forms to outline sustainable investments from an environmental and/or social.

In conclusion,

considering what is reported in the premises and the assumption that the investments that private operators, associations and public administration bodies have to face constitute a high non-



ordinary commitment, not only in economic terms, but also in professionalizing human resources at different levels, it becomes fundamental to obtain financial support, the design of a supported Business Plan must turn to INNOVATIVE and extraordinary financial architecture tools: first of all use a system of blended finance criteria, through "fund raising" which in addition to a contribution of self-financing in cash and/or kind by the proposing investors, meeting multiple sources of "sustainable finance" (European Parliament 19/06/2020), both from institutional sources (PNRR/PRRR - CDP - EIB/EIF - EFSI Equity Instruments Fund - EEEFunds – etc.), and from private sources (Business Angels - Equity/Quasi Equity also through the issue of Social Impact Bonds/Green bonds).

The crisis caused by COVID-19, and now the energy crisis resulting from the war in Ukraine, has created an urgent need for a just, equitable, environmentally sustainable and, in particular, “impact- driven” recovery that serves all people and preserves our planet, and IARC and the organizations that are part of it, due to the role of aggregator it plays at an international level, can be the right driver to inform and promote the creation of networks and aggregations between the actors of both the private system, that of the Public Administration as well.



SYNERGY WITH NUMEROUS INSTITUTIONAL AND PRIVATE PARTNERS

Marco MAGRINI

President of Province of Varese

I had the opportunity to learn about the "Borgo Paradiso" project, under construction in the town of Veddo, a hamlet of the municipality of Maccagno with Pino and Veddasca, and I found the initiative extremely interesting for its approach in line with some of the main issues that the Province has been addressing for some years now, cultivating a close network of relationships and collaborations with large and small stakeholders, institutional and private, throughout the provincial territory, through the widest possible horizontal and vertical Governance.

Reading the project, I had the opportunity to observe with pleasure how various elements that attracted my attention align with the objectives and investment lines that the Province is following through its own initiatives and projects.

Projects that, I would like to emphasize, are finding approval and appreciation not only from many local administrations and leading territorial institutions, such as the Provincial Chamber of Commerce or the MAGA contemporary art museum in Gallarate, but also from the Lombardy Region itself and the Cariplo Foundation, two of the most important funding channels, one institutional and the other private, in the territory. In fact, in recent years they have contributed to financing the implementation of many of the strategies and projects that we have developed and are continuing to carry forward for sustainable and inclusive progress throughout our territory. It is no coincidence that many of the issues on which we have focused and which I will speak to you about shortly, through Dr. Gaifami, fit perfectly into the development guidelines of the Lombardy Region, such as the regional strategy for internal areas entitled "Agenda del Controesodo" or the attention of the Region for the development of strong intermodality in its territory, alongside widespread cycling mobility.



In this sense, the first thing that caught my attention was precisely the location of the project and therefore its focus on a mountain area of our pre-Alpine range still considered an internal area. A territory that can boast a great naturalistic and landscape heritage, but that unfortunately or fortunately in the past has not received the same attention that other places have received. The fact that a private entity is carrying out a productive intervention, capable of bringing new economies to this territory, but with rigorous respect for these places, an aspect that has been lacking elsewhere in the past, I consider a positive factor. A respect that among other things does not only take into consideration environmental values, but also takes into account the culture of the territory, developing an approach that makes environmental sustainability and respect for territorial peculiarities two key aspects. The fact, in fact, that the town has been recovered respecting the historicity of the village and with the aim of developing a type of hospitality attentive to the quality of life of the residents already present, through the model of the widespread hotel and respecting the pedestrian nature of the village, are elements that, although partly due to compliance with laws or demands of the market itself, today much more attentive to similar elements are not at all obvious. The fact that the private investor has decided to fully embrace these elements, even making them elements of strength, also with a view to creating new jobs for the territory and making a contribution to the fight against the depopulation of these beautiful mountain lands is something that I find very appreciable.

In addition to this, I was positively impressed by the synergy that this project was able to develop in particular with two key aspects that we are bringing forward in the strategic development of our beautiful territory, namely culture and sustainable mobility.

The investments that, in fact, in recent years have seen us as protagonists in developing our cycle/pedestrian network, a commitment that has allowed us to consistently develop an important heritage, find an appreciable correspondence in the desire of the project to enhance and insert ourselves, as users, in the cycling network of the northern part of the Province.

The same can be said for the intermodality that the project seems to want to enhance, an aspect in which the Province has invested a lot in recent years and which finds excellent confirmation in the desire of these investors to focus on a village that, although small, thanks to lake



navigation and the proximity of the Maccagno station, is able to project itself towards Switzerland, Piedmont, Lombardy and central Europe. A connectivity that is also possible thanks to the strengthening of the connections that today, through the TILO of the Swiss railway line, put the town in direct contact, through 14 daily trips, with Bellinzona and with the international airport of Milan Malpensa. Fundamental hub for the regional capital city and also a point of reference for the upcoming Milan - Cortina 2026 Olympics. Airport which however is hosted within the territory of the Province of Varese.

Finally, regarding the cultural theme, the fact that the renovated village, and the forms of tourism that it wants to promote, want to be included in the formula of cultural enhancement and revitalization that the Province is carrying forward for its territory, also in a touristic key, with the important project "Varese Cultura 2030" is something that lets us foresee an investment direction and a desire for development in line with the interests and priorities of the territory.

The project that the Province, in synergy with numerous institutional and private partners, has in fact submitted this year to the important call for tenders of the Cariplo Foundation called "Emblematici Maggiori", the most significant line of financing that this important private institution makes available to administrations and territories, wants to work precisely on the enhancement of the identity of the territory, highlighting its diversity as a reflection of a wealth of offerings and cultural depth. A wealth that finds its beating heart and its distinctive and most profoundly identifying aspect, also linked to art and history, in the link between the Natural Landscape and the Territory, in a sustainable way.

All this gives us hope for the creation of ever greater synergies between this project and the excitement with which we are feeding our territory, thanks to the uninterrupted work of officials and designers, and in this perspective I feel like supporting the "Borgo Paradiso" initiative.



A Local Development Initiative through Urban Regeneration and Job Creation

The Territorial Context

Ivan VARGIU and Roberto CALEBASSO

Mayor of Municipality of Maccagno with Pino and Veddasca

Veddo is one of over 18 small historical localities that make up the municipality of Maccagno con Pino e Veddasca. This unique “diffused municipality” reflects a long process of merging historical settlements, which began in the 20th century and concluded around ten years ago with the formation of the current municipality.

This small community embodies both the positive and negative characteristics typical of Italy's "internal areas." These qualities, both challenging and remarkable, contribute to its uniqueness. Once considered a "marginal" area, Veddo benefits from its relative isolation, as its environment remains largely unspoiled by the urbanization and construction that affected other regions deemed more central. As a result, its natural beauty and rich historical and cultural heritage have become its greatest assets.

Located on the northern shores of Lake Maggiore, Veddo has recently gained attention for its appeal not only to international tourists (mostly Swiss and Northern Europeans) but also to local visitors. The post-pandemic shift in lifestyle and work trends has further increased interest in smaller, healthier, and more authentic locations like Veddo.

This area, which saw a sharp population decline of around 80% over the last 60 years, is now suddenly becoming attractive again. It's not only a refuge for professionals seeking occasional



escapes from urban life but also a desirable place for young couples looking for a new balance between life and work. Many of these individuals work in tourism or fields connected to experiential travel and exploration.

The Reasons for the Investment

The unique characteristics of this territory and the recent dynamics driving its development - particularly the rise in tourism and market interest - are the key reasons behind this investment. Among the 18 localities that form the municipality, Veddo stands out for several reasons. Known as the "terrace over the lake," it boasts an elevated position that offers unparalleled views of Italy's second-largest freshwater lake, while remaining close to services and logistical conveniences found in Maccagno.

Situated just 1.2 km from Maccagno's train station (served by Swiss railways) and only 20 km from Lugano and Locarno, Veddo is well connected. It is also 80 km from Milan Malpensa International Airport and 15 km from the A2 highway, which links to the Gotthard Tunnel — the primary north- south road artery of Europe. This strategic location allows easy access not only to Switzerland but also to central and northern Europe.

Additionally, Veddo sits at the entrance of the Veddasca Valley, an area rich in natural and scenic value, with many cycling and hiking routes recently developed to enhance the region. The valley is also part of the Ticino, Val Grande, and Verbano MAB Biosphere Reserve. Much of the surrounding area falls under the SIC designation, identifying it as a community interest site.

Logic of the Project

A Sustainable Urban Regeneration Approach

The project, led by IMHOLD SRL, began with the acquisition of a significant real estate portfolio, including more than 12 large properties and several thousand square meters of buildable land. It follows a regenerative approach, not only restoring the built environment but also reviving the social and relational fabric of the small village through job creation.

The renovation process focused on eco-sustainability, incorporating renewable energy systems and adhering strictly to the historical and cultural context.



For example, all existing pedestrian paths were preserved. This method has guided the renovation of all 12 properties acquired, a principle that will continue to be applied in future restoration and construction on the acquired land.

Currently, the renovation of the 12 buildings has created 18 apartments, most of which are rented on a medium-term basis or used for tourism, as well as a bed-and-breakfast with 5 rooms mainly serving tourists.

Over the medium to long term, the project aims to complete ongoing work and build new properties, adding 16 more apartments, 6 additional rooms, a swimming pool, a spa area, recreational spaces, gardens, a restaurant, and a conference center. The conference center will also serve as a coworking space for both permanent and temporary residents.

Revitalizing the Territory through Job Creation

Alongside urban regeneration, the second focus of the project is job creation, crucial for making the area attractive, particularly to young people. Merely creating pleasant living conditions is not enough to attract residents — job opportunities must also be available. The project tackles this through two key initiatives:

Establishing a new productive activity by opening a regional office of SOGES Technical Assistance, a subsidiary of IMHOLD specialized in sustainable local development projects. SOGES is already active in northern Varese province and will now expand to Veddo.

Developing an immersive tourist hospitality model with an "albergo diffuso" (an innovative hotel concept that spreads rooms throughout a village). This model respects the historical and cultural context and promotes a sustainable, year-round tourism that harmonizes with the daily rhythms of local residents. It is expected to generate both direct and indirect employment opportunities in the area.

The Results

Short-term Results (Already Achieved)



Job Creation: For the first time in 50 years, a company has established itself in Veddo, creating six jobs. Though most of these positions are already filled, their presence signals new energy and vitality for the village, potentially attracting other companies and freelancers.

Property Value Increase: The regeneration of part of the village has already led to a rise in property values, benefiting long-time residents rather than fueling speculative real estate ventures.

Medium/Long-term Results

Job Creation: The completion of the "albergo diffuso" (currently 80% finished) is expected to generate 20-25 direct jobs in hospitality, along with 8-10 indirect jobs related to services and suppliers.

Real Estate Development: It is hoped that the ongoing development will encourage other property owners to renovate their homes, sparking a ripple effect that could further revitalize the village, attract new businesses, and increase the resident population.

A Vision for the Future of Public Spaces

Looking forward, the goal is to establish agreements with local authorities to manage the public and social spaces that have been restored in the village, fostering new synergies for sustainable and community-driven development.



VALORIZATION OF LOCAL PRODUCTIONS AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE REPOPULATION OF BORGO PARADISO

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- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Territorial identity and typical products**
- 3. Approach to the problem and Intended users**
- 4. Consequences of the use of these products and related services**

1.Introduction

In recent years, in the limelight of political debates and the main mainstream information channels, we have been able to observe the increase and spread of some terms such as “sustainability”, “globalization”, “energy transition”, “green revolution” and “climate change”. Beyond the speculations and the origins of the various phenomena that have led to the spread of these terms, we can deduce one certainty: the needs of people and consumers are in a phase of change and evolution.



Climate change in recent years has led to the worsening of adverse phenomena for agriculture and to an increase in their frequency such as to reach an average of 9 extreme events (hail, water bombs, tornadoes, heat waves, etc.) per day along the Peninsula in 2023.

To get an idea of the extent of the problem, a report by Coldiretti, presented on December 5th on the occasion of the World Soil Day declared by the United Nations, Italy lost 77 km² of soil in 2022, of which 2/3 were taken away from agriculture.

In half a century, it is estimated that approximately 1 in 3 agricultural land has been lost along the entire Italian Peninsula, thus dropping to an SAU of 12,598,156 hectares (“Italian agriculture – the numbers. Coldiretti, 2020).

Having made the necessary considerations, we can affirm that the category of agricultural entrepreneurs is facing considerable challenges and consequently all the operators who work around these companies.

Considering that the only way to differentiate the primary product is through the quality certification system, it is important to consider that those who do not fall into these higher-end products are forced to further cut production costs which has repercussions on personnel (to date, 2024, a qualified worker with a permanent contract has a daily salary of 70 euros) and on production volumes

2.Territorial identity and typical products

Premises:

A 2020 Coldiretti report shows that in Italy there are an estimated 1,145,705 companies with an average size of around 11 ha and multifunctional in nature.

Exports are estimated at around 42.34 billion for an added value of 33.07 billion euros. (Lombardy leads the way with 3.61 billion euros for added value, followed by Veneto with 3.11 billion, Sicily 3.06 billion and Puglia 2.84 billion).

98% of these companies require the contribution of family labor, deeply linking Italian agriculture to that of local populations, although there is an increase in the use of foreign labor.



In 2020, it is reported that the employment rate under 40 (critical threshold for access to funding for the youth segment) is below 8% and it is important to point out that the under 40 segment would seem to contribute to the value of agriculture to be double compared to the over 40 segment, signaling the strong need for a generational change.

In Italy we estimate 822 geographical indications (DOP, IGP, STG) divided into 523 in the wine sector and 299 in the food sector mainly intended for export (2018 Qualivita Report - ISMEA) opening as the leader within the European Union.

With this data in mind, another Coldiretti report together with the Symbola Foundation of 2024 estimates that 93% of geographical indications are born in Italian municipalities with less than 5000 inhabitants.

Consequences and considerations

By observing the following data we can well deduce that Italian agriculture is mostly organized as an activity firmly intertwined with the territories and local populations given the modest size of the company and the strong use of family labor.

About a quarter of the UAA is used for meadows and pastures and 15% for activities related to the woods, underlining how the CAP and the multifunctionality of the company have led to the emergence of a new figure of the farmer, no longer just a figure linked to the production and sustenance of the primary needs of the community, but as a true custodian of the territory and its identity.

Although this may give an idyllic and bucolic portrait, it plays a fundamental role in the fight against climate change as the worsening of climatic phenomena and the phenomenon of soil erosion leads to phenomena of genetic contraction of plants and animals due to the relative loss of ecosystems.

Not only for hedonistic and economic reasons, but preserving local varieties of plants (or animal breeds) allows the preservation of genetic resources to draw on to face threats such as pathogens and constantly changing climate conditions.



Examples of how preserving diversity can lead to the resilience of a species (*Olea Europea*) are the case of the Leccino, Favolosa¹⁷, Leccio del Corno varieties that are representing resources for the regeneration of the Apulian areas affected by *Xylella fastidiosa* subsp. *pauca*.

The Lombardy case

In 2018, Lombardy had a UAA of 958,378 ha for an added value of 3.61 billion euros with a number of geographical indications of 78:

- 36 in food (20 DOP, 14 IGP, 2 STG)
- 42 in wine (27 DOP and 15 IGP)

Third region for territorial impact in Italy for an estimated heritage of 1.9 billion euros for its geographical indications; its agricultural production is supported by companies (a tenth of the 41,120 with entrepreneurs under 40) 97.3% of which are managed by direct farmers and their families. (approximately 124,043 people of workers, most of whom are family members)

A fifth of the UAA is intended for pastures and 97 thousand hectares are intended for forestry activities, bringing the number of hectares intended for positive environmental services to almost 300 thousand hectares.

The demographic problem

First region in Italy by number of inhabitants (10,020,528 inhabitants) with a density of 420 inhabitants/km for 12 provinces for a total of 1502 municipalities (1527 in 2017) of which almost 70% have a population of less than 5000 inhabitants, showing a strong phenomenon of abandonment of rural and suburban areas.

Taking a step back, we learned how 93% of protected geographical indications are born in these municipalities with less than 5000 inhabitants, how the work of entrepreneurs under 40 brings double added value compared to older generations, both for access to financing and for a mind-set that is on average more open and proactive, typical of new generations.

It is clear, therefore, that the intervention of community policies is crucial to preserve these micro realities that, in resisting the demographic decline, bring considerable added value to the entire region, both economically and in terms of identity.



3.Approach to the problem and Intended Use

Although in the long term the path to persevere on is the establishment of social services to support the local population and the strengthening of roads and connections with large centers, an effective way to support these places is through a well-studied program of training and information of a national and extra-national nature that aims to create a virtuous tourist and to prefer sustainable and non-massive tourism that does not distort the identity reality and the social fabric of these places so that the acceptance of foreigners can be a resource and not a source of controversy, currently underway in places such as Spain and France.

Beyond the natural landscapes and potential cultural activities that these places can offer, one of the fundamental resources lies in the character of the territorial activities (agriculture, forestry and fishing) and the resulting local productions and quality brands (which capture the essence of the territory so much so that they are largely exported outside national borders, contributing to an export value in 2017 of 9 billion euros).

Having made the necessary premises, we can observe how rural tourism comes to intertwine with food and wine tourism whose bases can be summarized with this quote:

"To know other cultures, an experience of tasting the typical foods and wines of that territory is necessary. This is the primary objective that the tourist sets himself, that is to explore and taste foods and drinks in order to live a unique and specific culinary experience of a destination".

4.Consequences of the use of these products and related services

Organizing a food and wine tour requires the involvement of different actors who communicate and collaborate in order to organize an effective promotion of the territory and local realities that does not stop only at highlighting the existence of the existing reality, but of a real active involvement of the tourist as an active part of the salient moments of production, tasting of the product and a real story-telling of the historical-cultural identity of the latter. It follows that the tourist must be guided so as to avoid the creation of tourist traps and speculative phenomena that ruin the experience offered.

is becoming more and more popular also because the habits of tourists have changed, who no



longer dedicate as much time to recreational activities as they once did, especially for economic reasons, in this way the travel lover will be able to treat themselves to a simple trip out of town on the occasion of certain food and wine events that are now omnipresent in the various locations of our Italy throughout the year with countless food and wine tours in farmhouses that allow horseback riding to better immerse yourself in nature and also discover what many define as "rural tourism". Food and wine tourism, therefore, aims to enhance a certain place, territory, characterized by unique scents, flavors and colors, every small village has something to tell and does so through its local products, to allow the most curious to understand what is behind so much dedication to the cultivation of the land and to still marvel at the sight of a beautiful form of cheese, or the tasting of a good glass of wine.

Here the concepts of well-being and leisure come into play, as the new frontiers of tourism that include activities aimed at leisure and self-realization and, in this specific case, these forms of tourism, as well as a transversal component, are the main motivation for the movement of a certain target of users. These are more aware, active, demanding, innovative. This is the identikit of the new food and wine tourist who, attentive to the issues of safety and sustainability, has reached maturity; he is now a true sentinel of virtuous tourism, a sort of stakeholder of the place and of the company that operates in harmony with its territory. The choice of a destination, therefore, becomes a sort of "prize" to the areas and agricultural companies that have worked for authentic and harmonious development, re-evaluating and protecting the local culture, creating new job opportunities especially for young people and women. And the loyalty of the tourist, with the purchase of products, appears as a logical consequence of the experience lived. Food and wine tourism offers that little something extra that piques the interest of the tourist. If we add to this the component represented by design, fashion, art, music, the result is a significant attractive force. Food and wine and the arts are configured as important information tools, capable of transmitting and narrating the meaning and value of centuries, if not millennia, of cultural traditions and immersing the tourist in authentic, engaging experiences through which to come into contact and get to know a place and the people who live there.



The CENSIS report identifies five main categories of tourists:

1. *The curious;*
2. *The explorers;*
3. *The professionals;*
4. *The wine fans;*
5. *The wine experimenters.*

Let's get to know them in detail:

1. *The curious*, who have little specific knowledge, but are extremely interested in the sector;
2. *The explorers*, who especially include the young age group between thirty and forty-five, who love to frequent wineries and wine shops;
3. *The professionals*, who are perfect connoisseurs of wine tourism routes and have a high spending capacity;
4. *The wine fans*, who are extremely interested in stays and trips and who have a good knowledge of the experiences to undertake;
5. *The wine experimenters*, who direct their experience towards the culture of the sector.

At this point it is clear that a glass of wine and a typical local dish is able to tell the true essence of a territory. This is how, forms of emerging tourism such as Food Tourism & Wine Tourism, can concretely contribute to the development and promotion of the territory in social and economic terms, but also to the improvement or repositioning of the image and reputation of the territory, since the concept of vacation is closely related to the cultural, social and economic evolution of many countries. In order to connect what has been outlined so far, it is worth highlighting the theme of quality that has begun to attract growing attention in Western companies since the last decade, acting as an additional front of intervention in the processes of value generation and in the comparison with the market. In reality, the interest in quality has always been implicitly present in management logics, even if for a long time it has not been the



subject of specific analysis and formal procedures have not been developed for a rational approach to the problem. The difference, compared to what happened in the past, is that the consideration for quality has acquired more defined contours, that is, methodologies have been identified to facilitate its control and improvement and its implications have been made explicit, starting from the economic and marketing ones. However, there is not always clarity regarding the concept of quality and the criteria for pursuing it. In some cases the term quality is understood as a synonym for high range and high brand image, while in others it is used to indicate a tendency towards perfection and artisanal care in the workmanship, but, it is clear that quality is purely subjective.

Important in this are associations such as Slow Food that deal with the protection of production techniques and allow the meeting between the production reality and the final consumer in a harmonious way. In Lombardy we count 18 Slow Food presidia including the Peperone di Voghera, the Goat Violin from Valchiavenna, the Varzese-Ottone-Tortonese cattle breed and the high Alpine mountain honeys.

This allows us to understand that the valorization and rediscovery of these rural realities could lead to the expansion of a panorama of products that would allow a further enrichment of the national heritage, but for this to be possible it is important that these places survive and that the knowledge is passed down.



Goat Violin and Voghera Pepper



Varzese-Ottone-Tortone triple-purpose breed

Borgo Paradiso

Located in the province of Alto Varese within the municipality of Maccagno con Pino e Veddasca (2041 inhabitants), it represents a pearl not far from the shores of Lake Maggiore and the mountains of Val Veddasca.

In this place it is possible to taste typical products of the Varese area such as the Varesino DOP honey, the Formaggella del Luinese DOP, the Olio dei laghi Lombardi DOP, the “Ronchi Varesini IGT”, the Gorgonzola DOP of Varese, the Capracanta typical of Val Veddasca and specifically of Maccagno con Pino e Veddasca and much more.



Since many products are made by small businesses, it is important to ask ourselves not only what the territory and the primary sector can do for tourists and the hospitality sector, but how the latter can serve the community so that a symbiotic relationship of mutual growth and relief can be created.

It is easy to think that many valid products are present in these territories, but that due to demographic decline and the lack of generational change, there is a risk of losing part of our



heritage and how the right contribution of the community can make it possible to rediscover and enhance them for use by a larger public, including through associations such as Slow Food. Where there is a supply chain, there is wealth and where there is wealth, there are workers and families.

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TOWARDS SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY OF TOURISM

Charles-Etienne BÉLANGER

Director of the International Organization for Social Tourism

Definition of Social Sustainability

Social sustainability in tourism is about stakeholders taking into account the social aspects of tourism for the people living in the places visited, the workers in the sector and the visitors themselves, with a view to ensuring their long-term survival.

By taking this into account, we aim to guarantee social justice, equal opportunities and a good quality of life for all in tourism by:

- Controlling the negative impact of tourism on present and future populations and on their social, cultural, financial and environmental resources;
- Amplifying the sustainable social benefits for all (residents, workers, visitors) in terms of accessibility, inclusion and strengthening of social ties;
- Encouraging participatory governance in tourism development;
- Promoting responsible and respectful behaviour towards both visitors and the people and places they visit.

Social sustainability in tourism is linked to its effects on societies, cultures and territories, and is assessed using a number of criteria for the various stakeholders.

Criteria for assessing social sustainability

Focus on the key players:

- Local populations
- Tourism workers
- Visitors
- Operational sector in tourism



-
- Public authorities

Local population

- The degree of social acceptability by the population of the tourist activity and of any new tourist development;
- The level of participation of the population in the decision-making process and the consideration in public policies of the positive aspects - such as the income and jobs generated by tourist activity - but also the negative elements -gentrification, displacement of residents, rising cost of living, housing crisis, etc.;
- The consideration of the impacts of tourism activities and facilities on spatial planning.

Tourism Workers

- Working conditions (valuing skills, working hours, holidays, length of contract, accommodation);
- The level of training and qualifications as well as the guarantee of continuous training;
- The degree of inclusion without discrimination at all levels of jobs and functions.

Visitors

- Participation and non-participation in tourism, leisure and holiday activities;
- The diversity of visitors and the accessibility of tourist sites for all without discrimination;
- Access to information and awareness of the culture, customs and traditions of the societies visited.

Operational Sector in Tourism

- A transparent remuneration policy in line with staff skills, duties and responsibilities;
- Non-discriminatory human resources policies promoting diversity and equality at all levels of jobs and functions;
- A commitment to a policy of social responsibility and balanced, sustainable relations for the players involved throughout the tourism chain.



Image: <https://worldtraveltourismcouncil.medium.com/where-does-travel-tourism-create-the-most-jobs-4c3347670a78>

Public authorities

- The existence of schemes to help people go on holiday; the size of budgets allocated and actually spent on tourism-related social programmes;
- The implementation of a managed tourism policy that safeguards the tangible and intangible heritage and local culture;
- The management of tourist flows to avoid overcrowding of tourist sites and public spaces and promote social and territorial cohesion.

Pathway Indicators



ISTO's Commitments

1. To provide a forum for reflection and experimentation on social sustainability and to become a key stakeholder in lobbying, disseminating and promoting social



sustainability to all stakeholders in the tourism ecosystem, in particular operators, national, regional and local public authorities and international and regional institutions active in the tourism and sustainable development sector.

2. To collect and consolidate information data on the social sustainability of tourism, thanks in particular to contribution members active training research, by creating a tool for observing analyzing social, sustainable solidarity-based dimensions tourism. To collect and consolidate information data on the social sustainability of tourism, thanks in particular to contribution members active training research, by creating a tool for observing analyzing social, sustainable solidarity-based dimensions tourism.
3. To encourage its own members in the social and solidarity tourism sector to implement the social sustainability of tourism in practice in their service offer, while encouraging them to carry out development, evaluation, research and innovation activities in this respect.
4. To foster cooperation with a view to identifying and developing measurable indicators and to promote, through various means of dissemination, the inclusion of criteria and indicators for the social sustainability of tourism in the policies, strategies and programmers of national, regional and local administrations responsible for tourism development.



BORGO PARADISO

The Delicate Nature of Maintenance and Recovery in Our Buildings

Selene OSSOLA

*Architect Specialized in Bioclimatic Architecture, Green Building, and Sustainability
Management.*

Today

I want to explore an exciting opportunity in architecture through the lens of Borgo Paradiso. This charming village, nestled on steep terrain near the lake, presents us with unique challenges and wonderful possibilities for sustainable development.

As we look to the future

of Borgo Paradiso, we must consider the delicate nature of maintenance and recovery in our buildings. These processes are crucial for preserving the integrity of our structures. Unfortunately, in many historic areas, including ours, we've seen the repercussions of using materials that clash with the original architecture. A lack of understanding of a building's bioclimatic context can lead to significant deterioration, often manifested in familiar ways, such as blistering plaster caused by humidity.

This brings us to the importance of selecting appropriate materials for our renovations and new constructions. For example, lime plaster stands out as a sustainable option for our stone and brick walls. It aligns beautifully with the historical context of our village while ensuring durability and aesthetic harmony. By using materials that resonate with the original construction, we not only honor the past but also lay the groundwork for a more sustainable future.



As we admire the picturesque farmhouses and charming stone houses in historic villages, we inevitably start to ponder their energy efficiency and ecological footprint. Did you know that the construction sector is responsible for 42% of global carbon dioxide emissions? This staggering statistic highlights the urgent need for sustainable practices in our developments.

At Borgo Paradiso, many of our buildings are energy-intensive and underperforming. Our objective is to implement interventions that not only reduce environmental impact but also utilize materials that require minimal resources, such as wood, straw, and hemp.

These natural materials offer remarkable benefits. They provide excellent thermal and acoustic insulation, making them ideal for our historic village, where the irregularity of walls often poses unique challenges. An innovative approach might involve using cellulose insulation within cavity walls. This technique allows for effective thermal regulation without compromising the building's integrity. Layering this with wood fiber panels and finishing with clay or earthen plaster can help manage humidity effectively, creating a healthier indoor environment.

Heating and cooling solutions are another critical aspect of our sustainable vision for Borgo Paradiso. We have a variety of options available, such as wall systems equipped with heat pumps, infrared heating, and biomass stoves. The choice of heating solution will always depend on the energy performance goals we aim to achieve. Additionally, integrating photovoltaic systems for electricity production and storage could pave the way for an energy community within Borgo Paradiso. This would allow residents to share renewable energy resources, fostering a sense of community spirit and collaboration.

In the context of hospitality,

ensuring excellent indoor air quality is paramount for guest comfort. Fine particles, allergens, and volatile organic compounds can accumulate in enclosed spaces, negatively affecting sleep quality, concentration, and respiratory health. To address these concerns, we can install controlled mechanical ventilation systems or advanced air purifiers equipped with HEPA filters,



UV-C lamps, and smart sensors. Furthermore, using natural materials like clay plaster can significantly enhance indoor air quality, contributing to a healthier environment for our guests.

Given the unique topography of Borgo Paradiso, rainwater management is another essential consideration. The steep terrain can lead to challenges in managing runoff and ensuring proper drainage. By implementing collection systems that integrate with our green spaces, we can enhance both functionality and aesthetics. Permeable surfaces, such as grass-block parking lots or infiltration trenches, can be designed to handle rainwater effectively, while also improving the visual appeal of our outdoor areas.

Moreover, the idea of creating urban gardens within our village can cultivate a sense of community among residents and guests alike. Imagine shared gardens where everyone can participate in caring for these spaces, fostering relationships and creating a lasting legacy for future visitors. Urban gardens can also serve as a source of fresh produce, contributing to food sustainability and enhancing the overall quality of life in Borgo Paradiso.

As we move forward with our vision for Borgo Paradiso, it's important to remember that our journey is not just about implementing sustainable practices. It's about creating a harmonious blend of innovation, community, and respect for our natural surroundings. By thoughtfully considering our unique environment and leveraging the right resources, we can navigate this journey while maximizing the efficiency and sustainability of our initiatives.

Transforming Borgo Paradiso into a sustainable model is both an exciting opportunity and a complex challenge. With the right information, collaboration, and community engagement, we can avoid potential pitfalls and set a precedent for sustainable living that can inspire other regions.



In conclusion

I invite all of you to join us in this endeavor. Together, we can create a future for Borgo Paradiso that not only preserves its rich heritage but also paves the way for a greener, more sustainable world. Our commitment to these ideals will leave a lasting impact, ensuring that our village remains a vibrant and beautiful place for generations to come.



Summary

Considering what is reported in the reports, it emerges that the investments that private operators, associations and public administration bodies must face constitute an extraordinary high commitment.

An extraordinary commitment not only in economic terms, but also in terms of professionalization of human resources at different levels including:

- design of a Business Plan
- innovative financial architecture tools
- enhancement of the territory's identity, highlighting its diversity as a reflection of a wealth of offerings and cultural depth.

As regards the cultural theme, the fact that the renovated village, and the forms of tourism that it wants to promote, want to be included in the formula of cultural enhancement and revitalization that the Province is carrying forward for its territory, also in a touristic key, provides us with a vision for the future of public spaces.

Looking to the future, this allows us to understand that the enhancement and rediscovery of these rural realities could lead to the expansion of a panorama of products that would allow a further enrichment of the national heritage, but for this to be possible it is important that these places survive and that the knowledge is passed down.

Since many products are made by small companies, it is important to ask not only what the territory and the primary sector can do for tourists and the hospitality sector, but how the latter can serve the community so that a symbiotic relationship of mutual growth and relief is created. It is easy to think that in these territories there are many valid products, but that due to the demographic decline and the lack of generational turnover we risk losing part of our heritage and how the right contribution of the community can allow us to rediscover and enhance them for use by a wider public.



Tools to be used when targeting tourism

- Provide a forum for reflection and experimentation on social sustainability and become a key player in lobbying, the tourism ecosystem,
- Collect and consolidate information data on the social sustainability of tourism, creating a tool for observing and analyzing the social, sustainable and solidarity dimensions of tourism.
- Encourage members in the social and solidarity tourism sector to implement the social sustainability of tourism in the practice of their service offering, while encouraging them to carry out development, evaluation, research and innovation activities in this regard.
- Promote cooperation in order to identify and develop measurable indicators and promote, through various means of dissemination, the inclusion of criteria and indicators for the social sustainability of tourism in the policies, strategies and programming of national, regional and local administrations responsible for tourism development.

Objectives

- Job creation: The completion of the Albergo Diffuso (currently 80% complete) is expected to generate 20-25 direct hospitality jobs, along with 8-10 indirect jobs related to services and suppliers.
- Property development: It is hoped that the ongoing development will encourage other property owners to renovate their homes, triggering a ripple effect that could further revitalise the village, attract new businesses and increase the resident population.
- Establish agreements with local authorities to manage the public and social spaces that have been restored in the village, fostering new synergies for sustainable and community-led development.

Conclusion

The crisis caused by COVID-19, and now the energy crisis resulting from the war in Ukraine, has created the urgency of a just, equitable, environmentally sustainable and, in particular, “impact-driven” recovery that serves all people and preserves our planet, and IARC-UNICART



and its member organizations, for the role of aggregator that it plays at an international level, can be the right driver to inform and promote the creation of networks and aggregations between the actors of both the private system and the Public Administration.

Together, we can create a future for Borgo Paradiso that not only preserves its rich heritage, but also paves the way for a greener and more sustainable world. The commitment to these ideals will leave a lasting impact, ensuring that the village remains a vibrant and beautiful place for generations to come.

Where there is a supply chain there is wealth and where there is wealth there are workers and families.



European Week of the Regions and Cities 2024
Peer review - Notes for dissemination
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Analysis, presentations and discussions during the peer review. Notes for dissemination

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On October 10, 2024, the International Academic Research Center – UNICART with the support of Consulmarc Sviluppo S.r.l. as an external organization hosted a peer review together with the Municipality of Maccagno con Pino e Veddasca Province of Varese (It) and Canton Ticino (Sw) on the topic of social and urban recovery.

Borgo Paradiso is a small and ancient village located on Lake Maggiore between the Canton Ticino (SW) and the Province of Varese (IT).

The project aims to enhance the territory, both in terms of social and urban recovery of (Borgo di Veddo) and from the point of view of the repopulation of the city that has seen a lack of residents and young people in recent years, towards the hospitality sector especially for the elderly projected into the future according to the most innovative aspects of the digital and technological revolution currently underway to become a "Short Accommodation Open Village".

The project aims to promote tourism that is aware of the territory, respectful of tradition, the environment and local culture, but decidedly projected towards the future and organised according to the most innovative aspects of the digital and technological revolution underway as well as energy efficiency using renewable energy sources according to the criteria of the SDG green deal.

The guiding idea of the initiative is to recover the real estate assets of Borgo di Veddo to make it become a short-lived "Open Village", whose ancient vital urban and settlement function is a moment of life and vital connection between the lake reality of the shore of Lake Maggiore on which Maccagno stands and the sylvan pastoral reality of the pre-Alpine environment given by the Alta Val Veddasca and the historic border with the nearby Swiss Confederation.

€ 20,00

